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Magalie R. Salas,
Secretary.

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OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Notice of Release of Draft Strategic Plan for U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System; Request for Public Comment

ACTION: Notice of release of Draft Strategic Plan for U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System and request for public comment.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the release of the Draft Strategic Plan for the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System and Request for Public Comment by the National Science and Technology Council's Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations (IWGEO). This draft plan was prepared to address the effective use of Earth observation systems to benefit humankind.

DATES: The Draft Strategic Plan will be available for public review on Wednesday, September 8, 2004, and can be accessed electronically at <http://iwgeo.ssc.nasa.gov/draftstrategicplan>. Comments on the Draft Strategic Plan must be received by the Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations no later than the close of business on Monday, November 8, 2004 (60 days).

Address for Comments: Only electronic (e-mail) comments will be accepted, and should be sent to: IWGEOcomments@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: CENR Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations, Carla Sullivan, Executive Secretary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Room 5810, Washington, DC 20230, telephone: (202) 482-5921, e-mail: Carla.Sullivan@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations (IWGEO) of the NSTC Committee on Environment and Natural Resources was established after the Earth Observation Summit for a two-fold purpose:

(1) To develop and begin implementation of the U.S. framework and ten-year plan for an integrated,

comprehensive Earth observation system to answer environmental and societal needs, including a U.S. assessment of current observational capabilities, evaluation of requirements to sustain and evolve these capabilities considering both remote and in situ instruments, assessment of how to integrate current observational capabilities across scales, and evaluation and addressing of data gaps; and

(2) To formulate the U.S. position and input to the international ad hoc Group on Earth Observations (GEO) as formed at the Earth Observation Summit on July 31, 2003.

In response to the first goal, the IWGEO has prepared a Draft Strategic Plan for the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System. The draft was prepared after a year of coordination among the over 15 agencies represented. In addition, a public workshop was held on June 16-17, 2004, for the purpose of allowing representatives of the communities-of-practice to contribute information and facts on the nine societal benefits areas, which provide the focus of the plan. These strategic social/economic areas include the following:

1. Improve Weather Forecasting;
2. Reducing Loss of Life and Property From Disasters;
3. Protecting and Monitoring Ocean Resources;
4. Understanding Climate, and Assessing, Mitigating, and Adapting to Climate Change Impacts;
5. Supporting Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, and Combating Land Degradation;
6. Understanding the Effect of Environmental Factors on Human Health and Well-Being;
7. Developing the Capacity To Make Ecological Forecasts;
8. Protecting and Monitoring Water Resources; and
9. Monitoring and Managing Energy Resources.

Associated Technical Reports referenced as Appendix 3 of the Draft Strategic Plan for the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System are currently being updated based on comments received at the June IWGEO public meeting. When completed, these Technical Reports, along with additional background information may be found at <http://iwgeo.ssc.nasa.gov/documents.asp?s=review>, or by contacting the IWGEO Secretariat office: Carla Sullivan, Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations (IWGEO), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington,

DC 20230. Telephone: (202) 482-5921, telefax: (202) 408-9674. E-mail: Carla.Sullivan@noaa.gov. Subject: Draft Strategic Plan for U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System.

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) was established by Executive Order 12881. The Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) is chartered as one of four standing committees of the NSTC for the purpose of advising and assisting the Council on those federally supported efforts that develop new knowledge related to improving our understanding of the environment and natural resources.

Ann F. Mazur,

Assistant Director for Budget and Administration.

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FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Formations of, Acquisitions by, and Mergers of Bank Holding Companies

The companies listed in this notice have applied to the Board for approval, pursuant to the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 (12 U.S.C. 1841 *et seq.*) (BHC Act), Regulation Y (12 CFR Part 225), and all other applicable statutes and regulations to become a bank holding company and/or to acquire the assets or the ownership of, control of, or the power to vote shares of a bank or bank holding company and all of the banks and nonbanking companies owned by the bank holding company, including the companies listed below.

The applications listed below, as well as other related filings required by the Board, are available for immediate inspection at the Federal Reserve Bank indicated. The application also will be available for inspection at the offices of the Board of Governors. Interested persons may express their views in writing on the standards enumerated in the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1842(c)). If the proposal also involves the acquisition of a nonbanking company, the review also includes whether the acquisition of the nonbanking company complies with the standards in section 4 of the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1843). Unless otherwise noted, nonbanking activities will be conducted throughout the United States. Additional information on all bank holding companies may be obtained from the National Information Center website at www.ffiec.gov/nic/.

Unless otherwise noted, comments regarding each of these applications must be received at the Reserve Bank